

Montana and the Sky



Department of Transportation – Aeronautics Division

Vol. 47 No. 10

October 1996

Record Flight Fulfills Dream

Despite a long list of aviation accomplishments, Columbus pilot Jim Damron had one flight plan he wasn't able to complete before his sudden death in July of 1995. But the idea of Damron's last flight didn't die with him.

Damron flew a nonstop, cross-county flight in September 1992 in a single-engine airplane without the aid of electronic navigational equipment, from Santa Maria, CA, to St. Simons Island, Georgia. At the time of his death, Damron was planning a second nonstop flight, a border-to-border trip from the Mexico-U.S. border to Canada.

Allen Rickman and his wife, Wanda, of Fishtail; Tim Blattie of Columbus; and Harold Blattie of Molt, decided to complete the mission of their fallen friend and pilot.

At 6:38 am on September 9, Rickman took off from Pecos, TX, flying the Stillwater Express—the same plane Damron flew 2,400 miles across the county in 1992.

The Stillwater Express is a 1949 Piper Super Cub, serial number 20, with 105 horsepower. It is fitted with extra fuel tanks in the back seat and under the belly.

Radios were used and Rickman had company. As Rickman flew the Stillwater Express, Tim Blattie and his father, Harold Blattie, flew Rickman's 150 Piper Super Cub, keeping within 50 miles of Rickman, taking photographs, and roving ahead, searching out the altitudes with the most favorable wind layers. Blattie was allowed to refuel but it had to be quick—he was in and out of the Miles City airport in about five minutes!

Rickman crossed the Canadian border and flew back to Glasgow landing at 8:23 pm on September 9 after traveling 1,275 miles. Thanks to tail winds and perfect

weather, Rickman completed the flight unexpectedly quick in 13 hours and 45 minutes. He carried 110 gallons of fuel and landed with 32 gallons to spare.

Members of the Montana Pilots Association met up with the planes in the air just south of Fort Peck, making the ending of the flight that much more eventful.

"Setting a record was not the goal of the second flight, it was our tribute to Jim," Rickman said.

Congratulations to Allen, Tim, Harold and all who contributed to this great event.



A surprise greeter on hand for the celebration at Glasgow was Jim Damron's daughter, Sandy from Klamath Falls, OR. Pictured are Harold, Tim, Sandy and Allen (l to r).

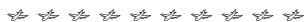


Administrator's Column

Another Broken Promise: The FAA has announced that they are closing the Bozeman Auxiliary Flight Service Station which was mandated by Congress only four years ago. The reason given to us is that no money was appropriated by Congress to keep it open beyond December 8, 1996. All of the Auxiliary FSS's in the lower 48 states will close. All Bozeman FSS functions will be remoted to the Great Falls consolidated Flight Service Station. This comes as quite a blow to the Gallatin Airport Authority and the Bozeman area pilots as Bozeman is the third or fourth busiest air traffic airport and second in airline boardings in Montana and does not have a control tower. Losing the airport advisory service provided by the FSS is a safety concern. It seems that the FAA has their funding priorities mixed as they have a "blank check" for hiring Flight Standards inspectors and procuring office facilities to house them, when in fact no one seems to know just what they are going to do with all of them. I feel that the FAA fails to recognize several important programs which directly and indirectly affect safety and, with the removal of the FAA's dual mandate of promoting aviation, we can expect less or no involvement in many good FAA programs.

Age 60 Rule Fought: The FAA's Age 60 Rule battle is heating up again. The Professional Pilots Federation (PPF) is taking this battle to a federal court where their challenge against the mandatory retirement at age 60 will be heard. The PPF has also called for a congressional investigation. The House of Representatives deleted funding for an NTSB study of the rule in 1997. The age 60 rule now only applies to pilots operating under Part 121, **however**, Part 135 pilots will fall under the same rule in year 2000. It's interesting that one of the supporting studies and data used by the PPF is proof that Part 135 pilots over age 60 are not a safety problem. The main opposition to the PPF is the Airline Pilots Association (ALPA) and Transportation Secretary Federico Pena. Arizona Senator John McCain, chairman of the Senate

Aviation Subcommittee and a supporter of PFP, will be conducting hearings on the Age 60 Rule later this year.



Business Aviation Targeted: According to a recent article in *Business Aviation*, President Clinton announced that he is proposing a new \$225 per-flight fee on business aircraft and that the money collected will go into the Aviation Trust Fund, however not to be used for aviation but to fund his new national literacy program initiative. This is the second time the President has tried to make aviation pay for his education programs. In June he proposed a \$10 increase in the international departure tax to fund community college education. Aviation industry leaders are outraged, to say the least. The National Business Aircraft Association (NBAA) stated that the fee is "unwarranted and arbitrary." NBAA disputes the Administration's cost estimates saying even the most negative FAA studies of cost imposed by business aircraft indicate 3.3 percent to 10 percent of the FAA budget, not the 25 percent impact stated by President Clinton. The General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA) stated that "the President is anxious to position himself as an education president and is looking for a number of things that would pass the laugh test—round up the usual suspects of where you would find the money." NBAA also stated that the proposal also "destroys any message" that money stated for the Aviation Trust Fund is actually used for aviation and is a "real contradiction" of the Executive Branch—the DOT is claiming a funding crisis for the FAA while the President "clearly sends out the signal that the money is not needed in aviation or it is not important to put out money there." John Zimmerman, president of Aviation Data Service of Wichita, called the Clinton tax proposal "an assault on employees, shareholders and management of the whole worldwide business aircraft industry" and is essentially saying "we're going to put a restrictive tariff on your flying and hope you'll cut it down, and even more, stop building those damn planes that are cluttering up our airports." James

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Montana and the Sky
Department of Transportation
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Official monthly publication
of the
Aeronautics Division
Telephone 444-2506
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Helena, Montana 59604
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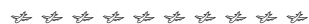
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Montana and the Sky is published monthly
in the interest of aviation in the
State of Montana.
Third Class postage paid at
Helena, Montana 59604

Subscription: \$5 per year
Editor: Debbie Alke
Editorial Assistance:
Q Communications Group

Administrator, cont.

Coyne, President of the National Air Transportation Association (NATA), charged that the proposal is a "serious threat to the availability of corporate aviation" and "with corporate flight departments and on-demand charter operators already downsizing, this could be the final blow for many; this move can only be viewed as the first step in the composition of new aviation user fees against which the industry has fought so hard." Don Fuqua, President of the Aerospace Industries Association (AIA), said the proposal "amounts to a user fee and will impose a significant and unnecessary economic burden on the aviation community, the aviation industry already pays its fair share of FAA funding" and that the president's proposal would be a step toward an FAA funded solely by user fees, and a system lacking accountability and any incentive to improve efficiency.



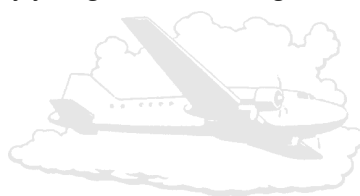
FAA To Phase Out Ground-Based Navigation Systems: The FAA plans to phase out most current ground-based navigation systems by 2010 and some even sooner. Omega will be terminated at the end of 1997 and Loran-C in 2000. This is all part of the 1994 Federal Radionavigation Plan and VORs, DMEs and ILSs will also be downsized and eventually phased out as transition to satellite-based navigation takes place.

Good News for EAS

Recent actions by Congress are extremely good news for BigSky Airlines and the seven central and eastern Montana communities which depend so heavily on the federal Essential Air Service (EAS) program to support their scheduled air services. In the future, these services will be more adequately funded and considerably more stable from year-to-year, eliminating the annual funding crisis which has gripped the program since the 1980s.

For FY 1997, the EAS program has been funded at \$25.9 million, up \$3 million from FY 1996. This should assure continuation of existing services and may permit some improvement during FY 1997.

USATA Calls for Pena's Removal: The United States Air Tour Association (USATA) has called for removal of Transportation Secretary Federico Pena from office due to his "deplorable" performance. The USATA has been in an on-going battle over the restrictions placed on them for operations over the Grand Canyon and now the Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado. The Rocky Mountain Park doesn't even have air tour operators, so why the restrictions? The USATA has charged that Pena has been "grossly and consistently negligent in his representation of the air tour industry," that if Pena is permitted to remain in office, "an entire industry may vanish, the air transportation requirements of a key segment of the American public will go unserved and the nation will suffer the loss more than a half billion dollars in positive economic impact annually." USATA Chairman Jim Petty charged that the administration is seeking to garner political support from environmentalists prior to the presidential election and Pena has sold out the air tour industry in the process. Nearly two million tourists, approximately 20 percent of whom are elderly, handicapped or very young, take air tour flights annually.



The "Rural Air Service Survival Act", sponsored by Senator Dorgan, ND, has been approved. This Act eliminates the 1998 sunset provision on the EAS program and provides a new permanent funding source, created by a tax on US overflights of foreign commercial air carriers. The tax is expected to generate at least \$50 million annually. Beginning October 1, 1997, these funds will be available to support EAS services, with any surplus going to improve rural air safety.

Montana Senators Max Baucus and Conrad Burns were avid supporters of the Act.

Calendar

December 10—FAA Safety Seminar, Glacier Electric Building, 7 pm
Sponsored by the Glacier Hangar of the MPA, Cut Bank.

January 31–February 1—Flight Instructor Refresher Clinic, Helena.

February 27–March 1—Montana Aviation Conference, Holiday Inn, Missoula.

Of Interest...

As reported, the airlines will hire a record number of pilots in 1996, as many as 8,300 if current trends continue, according to airline career specialist, AIR Inc. Airlines hired an average of 910 pilots a month through July, and 1,659 of the year-to-date total went to the majors. The number of pilots on furlough declined to 1,174 and American, Delta and Continental recalled all their furloughed pilots. AIR Inc. thinks it is possible that every major except USAir will be hiring by the end of 1997. ✈

Job Announcement

Director of Airports, Missoula, Montana. Manages, directs and supervises the operations of a non-hub air carrier airport and general aviation grass strip mountain airport. Airports are operated by an autonomous airport authority. Degree in Airport Management, Public Administration, Business Management or related field and five years of practical experience, or ten years of experience in airport management at a senior management level at a commercial service airport(s) required. The position requires accreditation by AAAE within three years of appointment. Salary range from \$50,000 D.O.E. Excellent benefit package. Send five copies of resume (three pages maximum) to Jack Meyer, Chair—MCAA Director Search Committee, P.O. Box 4187 Missoula, MT 59806. Applications close November 12, 1996. ✈

Russians In Helena

Youth and adults from Club Prodvig of Magadan, Russia, were treated to a visit to Montana sponsored by Loren Smith of Great Falls for a second year in a row.

Club Prodvig members are a highly trained and disciplined boys' organization, somewhat like a U.S. military prep school or the Boy Scouts of America.

During the group's weeklong visit to Montana, they were given an aviation awareness tour by the Montana Aeronautics Division, including a trip to the Helena College of Technology Aviation Maintenance Area, an afternoon tour of the Capitol building and a visit with Governor Marc Racicot.



Mike Ferguson and Jeanne Lesnik provided all with Young Eagle Flights.

With the success of the visits the last two years, Loren is hopeful this visit can become an annual event. ✈️



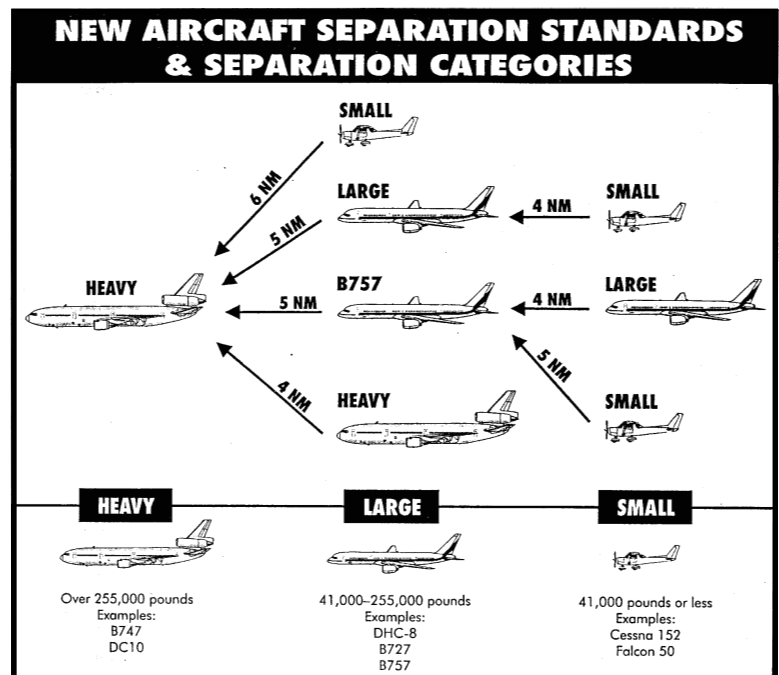
Museum of Mountain Flying Update

The Museum of Mountain Flying located in Missoula recently elected Stan Cohen as President and Duane Felstet as Vice-President.

The museum now owns its first airplane, a home-built Long Easy, donated by William and Myra Cook of Hamilton. The museum also acquired a two-ton truck thanks to a donation by Kathy Ogren and should provide enough parts to finish the original truck.

A third acquisition is clear title to the Ford Tri-motor remains at Big Prairie airfield in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area. The museum is currently attempting to get clearance from the U.S. Forest Service to use a helicopter to haul it out.

For further information on the museum, write PO Box 1417, Missoula, MT 59806.

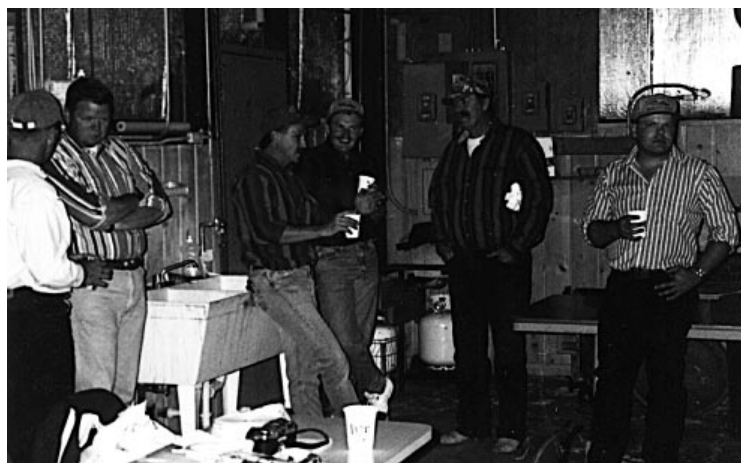


MPA Fall Fly-in



The Miles City Hangar of the Montana Pilots Association hosted the annual fall fly-in, September 6-8. At right, MPA State President, Dennis DeVivo of Dillon conducts the business meeting.

Visiting from Alberta were the McCarthys who own and operate Southern Aero, a full service FBO at both the Lethbridge and Springbank airports.



The fly-in provides time for MPA members and others to gather, discuss issues of concern and plan for future events.



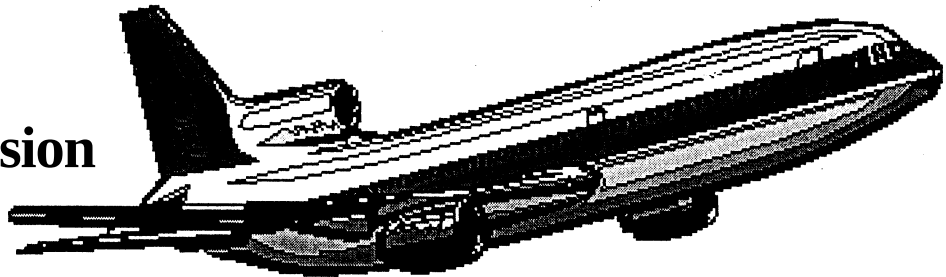
Delicious meals were provided throughout the weekend. A surprise appearance by Elvis was made at the Saturday evening dinner and hangar dance. Elvis arrived with silk scarves for all the ladies.



Aeronautics on World Wide Web

Our Home Page Below

Aeronautics Division



Administrator: Michael D. Ferguson
Phone: 406-444-2506

**This division has two bureaus:
Safety and Education
and Airport/Airways.**

The Safety and Education Bureau is responsible for registering Montana's 2,100 pilots and 3,000 aircraft. The bureau is also responsible for air search and rescue training and operations, and provides various seminars, clinics, and promotes aviation education.

The Airport/Airways Bureau assists airports with technical expertise. Their employees maintain and operate N.D.B. radio beacons, air-to-ground communication sites and the 13 state-owned airports.

The Aeronautics Division of the Department of Transportation is advised by the Aeronautics Board. The nine-member board represents various facets of the industry. The board works in conjunction with the Aeronautics Administrator and the Director of Transportation. A major function of the board is approving airport grant requests.

Individual Airport Planning	Newsletter	E-mail Us
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[Back to Home Page](#)

Check Out Our Web Page
By Redge Meierhenry

Above is the Aeronautics Home Page on the World Wide Web. Check us out. The URL is <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/aeronaut/aeronaut.htm> or we can be reached through Montana Department of Transportation's home page at <http://www.mdt.mt.gov>.

Currently accessible via our home page is our latest Standards Review for each NPIAS airport (federally eligible) in the state. Of note to our general readers without any specialized interest in airport planning topics, is an individualized NPIAS airport listing with:

- airport drawings and
- runway end photos.

Access these features through our home page button titled "Individual Airport Planning." To be able to read these documents, you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader. The reader is FREE and can be downloaded through our Web Page by the link provided. Once downloaded, you can have your browser start the Acrobat Reader application automatically. Call Jim Greil in our office for details on this.

Bonanza Vagabonds Visit Kalispell

Thirty Bonanzas and 50 people attended a fly-in of the Bonanza Vagabonds at Kalispell City Airport. The group, an informal organization of bonanza owners, gathers throughout the year to exchange information, learn and fraternize. Consisting of members from California, Oregon and Washington, the group's leader, Nels Fransen of Stockton, CA, is always searching for new, friendly airports to visit. The Montana Aeronautics Division assisted Nels by hosting the visit to Kalispell.



Bonanzas lined Kalispell City Airport and the 3000th A-36 Bonanza was on display at Strand Aviation.



Bill Spencer of Raytheon Aircraft was on-hand to talk Bonanza particulars. Thanks to Raytheon for its continued support of Montana aviation.

With the help of the Division's friends at Raytheon Aircraft in Denver, arrangements to have the 3000th A-36 Bonanza on hand for the fly-in were successful.

Bill Spencer of Raytheon attended the fly-in and presented an informative overview of the latest happenings within the company and at the Bonanza factory. Diane Russell, Russell Avionics, Spokane, gave an update to the world of avionics, including the latest on GPS. Mike Strand provided an excellent presentation on mountain flying.

Wrapping the event up was Dr. Jerald Cockrell who entertained the Bonanza owners at the closing dinner.

Thanks to all who assisted in welcoming the group to the Flathead Valley.



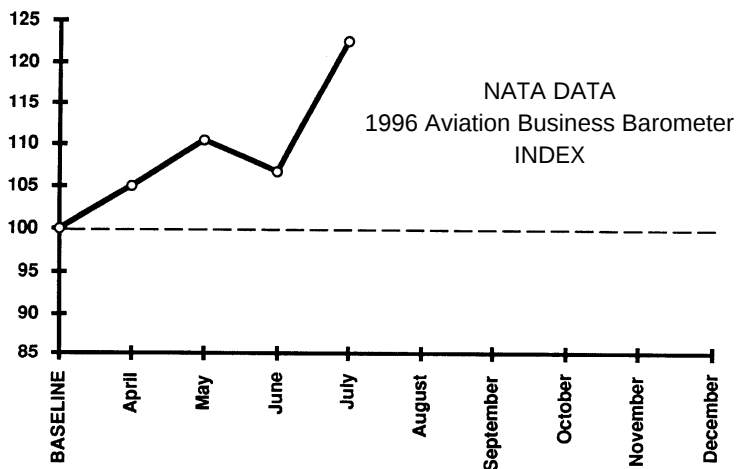
Flying to Alberta?

If so, a helpful aviation-related web site is the Calgary Flying Club weather reports. Try it at:

<http://www.lexicom.ab.ca/cfc/weather.html>

Aviation Business Booms in July

Aviation business activity recovered strongly in July after slumping in June. Led by a 30% increase in Jet A sales, both maintenance and flight training activity also sharply increased during July. Despite the average increase however, both air charter activity and AvGas sales slowed. NATA's Aviation Business Barometer tracks general aviation fuel sales (both Jet A and AvGas), charter flight hours, maintenance shop billable hours, and flight training hours (both ground and air). A representative sample of NATA members have agreed to provide monthly data for compilation and reporting.



Baseline (100) represents October–December 1995 three month average

Scholarships

AOM Flight Training Scholarship

The Aviation Organizations of Montana (AOM) includes representatives from the MAMA, MAAA, MATA, EAA, MFF, MT 99s, MPA, CAP, MAD, AMAA and the MSPA and was formed "to promote all facets of aviation in the State of Montana."

AOM has established a scholarship to financially assist a student pilot in obtaining their private pilot certificate. A \$500 scholarship will be awarded annually for five years to a Montana student pilot. The scholarship was first awarded in 1995. Applications are being accepted for the scholarship which will be presented at the Montana Aviation Conference in 1997. All applications must be postmarked by November 15, 1996.

Guidelines include: applicant must be a resident of Montana and all flight training must be received in Montana by a Montana registered CFI.

If you are unable to find an application, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope to MT 99s, c/o AOM Flight Training Scholarship, 1811 Baxter Dr., Bozeman, MT 59715 or call the Division at 444-2506.

Parrott Family Scholarship

The Parrott Family will award an aviation scholarship in 1997 to a Montana high school student.

The scholarship will pay \$1,000 and is to be used over a one-year period for pilot training programs for students enrolled in the Rocky Mountain College (RMC) aviation program. The funds may be used for tuition in the RMC aviation program, and/or flight training expenses leading to a Private, Commercial, or Flight Instructor Certificate, and may include Instrument and Multi-engine Ratings, that are required by the RMC aviation curriculum. Eligible expenses include aircraft rental, flight and ground instruction, simulator training, and the purchase of aviation-related educational materials and related supplies.

The award will be made by a selection committee and will be based on overall character, academic qualifications, seriousness of purpose, past aviation-related activities, if any, or any other criteria it determines to be appropriate.

Applicant's need to send a letter of application to the Montana Aeronautics Division, P.O. Box 5178, Helena, MT 59624. Application deadline is February 3, 1997.

The award will be made at the Montana Aviation Conference in Missoula at the end of February.

ALOA Scholarships

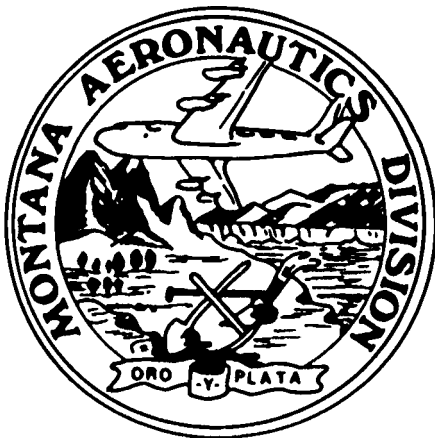
A Love of Aviation Scholarship (ALOA) established in 1993 by an anonymous donor due to the retirement of the Van DeRiet Flight Scholarship, will again be awarded in 1997.

Last year a second anonymous donor joined this excellent program, making two ALOA scholarships available to Montanans. Again this year two applicants will be chosen to receive these flight scholarships.

The \$250 scholarships are to be used to help defray costs of flight instruction and will be presented during the 1997 Montana Aviation Conference in Missoula.

Award of the scholarships will be based on applications in the form of a letter explaining the reasons for applying, future career goals, past aviation experience and any outstanding achievements.

Letters of application should be sent to Montana Aeronautics Division, P.O. Box 5178, Helena, MT 59624 or call 444-2506 for more information. Letters must be postmarked on or before February 3, 1997. ✈



October 1996

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